

Editorial

COMMENTS FROM THE OUTGOING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *SCIENTIA MARINA*

M. Pilar Olivar
Outgoing Editor-in-Chief

Dear colleagues and collaborators,

After four years as Editor-in-Chief of *Scientia Marina*, it is time for a change. From now on Dolors Vaqué is going to take over this responsibility. This has been the practice in *Scientia Marina*: after four years of work the post is taken over by a new person with new ideas and enthusiasm, though the working procedures—which have proven to be appropriate—are maintained. During this period I have willingly devoted most of my time to the journal's commitments and think that this has been an excellent experience. I have learned a lot from my colleagues on the Editorial Committee and the Scientific Editors, as well as from referees and authors. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with this team.

I would like to make some reflections on how we are doing. The journal's webpage and the databases of manuscripts have been renewed, incorporating tools that have helped us to speed up and secure the follow up of the manuscripts and the review process. At present, all articles published in *Scientia Marina* and in its predecessor, *Investigación Pesquera*, are uploaded to the webpage of the journal, and are fully available in open access. We also continue to publish the printed version and to send reprints to the authors. An important advantage of publication both online and in print is that articles are published online several months in advance of the print version. The fact that all the contents are online allows us to include additional material, such as long tables, images and videos. I invite you to continue visiting the journal's webpage, to consult the articles published, to use it as a search engine for finding papers dealing with your subject of interest, and even to search for referees for your assigned manuscripts.

All these tools allow us to achieve our stated goal of rapid turnaround times from submission to final editorial decision. At present the average time from reception to rejection of manuscripts is less than two months, from reception to acceptance less than six months and from acceptance to publication four months. We could not have achieved this without the dedication of the Scientific Editors, and we hope to improve these times in the future.

The impact factor of *Scientia Marina* according to the Science Citation Index has held a similar position in the last four years. This year it reached its highest value, 1.175. However, this is a really difficult contest. I think that the only way to substantially improve our impact factor is to publish good articles from authors of recognized prestige, which will attract more readers (new citations), and will in turn attract new authors to present similar research results. As Scientific Editors of the journal it should be easier for us to involve colleagues in our own speciality to publish with us. I am also thinking of senior researchers from our own institutions, who have reached a high position in their careers and do not need to publish in the most prestigious journals. I encourage them to send manuscripts and thus help the journal to improve.

I should mention here the work done in collaboration with my colleagues on the Editorial Committee, to whom I am indebted. Our weekly meetings—a routine which started with our previous Editor-in-Chief, Pere Abelló, at which we make the first assessment of the manuscripts—have been extremely helpful. During these four years we have taken some decisions, and only time will tell whether they were the right ones. Due to the limited number of pages that we are able to publish per year, in order to improve the journal's content we decided not to publish notes or preliminary results except when justified by the novelty or special interest of the subject. Also,

due to the large number of taxonomic articles that we have published in the last few months, in order to diversify the journal's content we decided to give preference in the publication process to articles of a multidisciplinary nature, which may be of interest to a wide audience.

The scope of the journal continues to be the same as that established when *Scientia Marina* started, and reflects the various disciplines of the *Institut de Ciències del Mar* (ICM-CSIC). The Editorial Board of *Scientia Marina* is relatively large, trying to include several specialists on the different subjects dealt with in the journal, so as not to overload the Scientific Editors with too many manuscripts per year. However, due to the journal's broad scope it is probably less regularly checked by particular experts than other more specialized journals. This is not an easy problem. We have to attract a very diverse audience, both readers and authors, so articles of a multidisciplinary nature and reviews that include thoughtful discussion about the current knowledge of particular areas of marine research will be welcomed because they will expand the interest of our journal.

Scientia Marina reaches many institutes and university departments working in marine science around the world, and because all the contents of the journal are offered in the open access system, we hope that it will reach an ever wider readership. The total number of manuscripts received for publication in the regular issues of the journal increased from 192 in 2006 to a peak of 250 in 2007, and will probably exceed this figure in the present year. Although the rejection rate is quite high, 71%, our publication rate has remained stable at 71 articles in 2006 issues and 72 in 2009. Among the published articles in these four years, I would like to mention some of the ones I especially like because of my scientific affinities: the feature article by Pauly (2009), the monograph on fish otoliths by Tuset *et al.* (2008), and the monograph devoted to the results of the 32nd Annual Larval Fish Conference, edited by Clemmesen *et al.* (2009).

It has been my unique privilege to work with an excellent team of Scientific Editors, whose work and insights is what makes *Scientia Marina* a journal of reference for marine science in Spain. I acknowledge the full support to the journal from the management of ICM-CSIC and the Publications Service of the CSIC. I would like to include special thanks to our secretary Victoria Martínez de Albéniz, who controls all our communications with authors and Scientific Editors and takes care of the formal aspects of the manuscripts, and to Alan Lounds and Catherine Stonehouse, who revised the English texts. Our technical editor, Jordi Corbera, deserves a special mention for his dedication to the journal, which goes beyond his duties and is reflected in his excellent work combining images and text, and taking care of the final layout of the journal.

And last but not least, I would like to thank you for all the time you have dedicated to *Scientia Marina*. I know that without your collaboration it would be impossible to continue publishing the journal.